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LETTER DATED 29 AUGUST 1994 FROM THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF GREECE TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

With reference to the letter addressed to you on 23 August 1994 by Dr. Alfred Serreqi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Albania (S/1994/985, annex), I wish to point out the following:

In its relations with Albania, Greece has pursued a policy of cooperation and good-neighbourliness based on the principles of respect for national sovereignty and territorial integrity. Greece has repeatedly stated her readiness to approach relations with Albania in a constructive way for the benefit of peace and stability in the broader region of the Balkans.

Witness to this policy is the vast programme of economic and humanitarian assistance extended over the last three years to Albania by Greece and its support for the process of reform and reconstruction in Albania, following its recent emergence from a long period of totalitarian rule. At this point, I would like to note that some 250,000-300,000 Albanians have illegally crossed the border and are working in Greece, regularly sending back considerable funds to the benefit of the Albanian economy.

With regard to the recent episode of the unauthorized flight of a crop-spraying plane over southern Albania, the Government of Greece unequivocally condemned all extremists and irresponsible acts by individuals, which run counter to the policy of Greece towards Albania. The pilot of the plane, a reservist officer who had been assigned to a non-combat unit, has been relieved of his duties and remains in custody. He is now facing the legal and administrative consequences of his actions.

However, this unfortunate incident can in no way be described as a "very grave and premeditated provocation against the sovereignty and integrity of the Albanian State", nor can it justify the discriminatory practices of the Albanian authorities against the Greek minority, five prominent members of which have been brought to trial on spurious and unfounded espionage charges, in total disrespect of their fundamental human rights. The modalities of their arrest and their detention, as well as the trial procedures, are in flagrant violation of internationally accepted standards of the administration of justice and of the right to a fair trial.

The persecution and harassment of the Greek minority, the curtailment of the educational, cultural and religious rights of its members, and the gross attempts of the Government of Albania to implicate Greece in the above-mentioned trial, are undermining the efforts of the Greek side to promote relations of friendship and cooperation between the two countries.

Further to the letter of Foreign Minister Mr. Karolos Papoulias (S/1994/429) and my letter dated 26 April 1994 to the President of the Security Council, I should also like to repeat our concern about the real motives of Albanian unfounded charges against Greece, including allegations of anti-Albanian plots with other Balkan States.

In view of the above, the Government of Greece appeals once again to Albania to respect the principles of democracy and human rights, to exercise self-restraint and to cease its current policy of tension towards Greece, so that all bilateral problems can be solved in good faith and through dialogue.

May I ask for your kind assistance in circulating the present letter as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Adamantios Th. VASSILAKIS
Deputy Permanent Representative
Chargé d'affaires a.i.